

Keynote Speakers

Ruth Fabby, MBE, DL

Artistic Director, Disability Arts Cymru (United Kingdom)

Born in Liverpool, Ruth has had hearing aids since the age of 6. She found it hard to find vocation for being perceived as deaf. At 22, Ruth trained in dance and discovered physical theatre. She attended the Liverpool Theatre School in Dance & Drama and began work, firstly as a performer, and over time, gradually developed skills in creative producing. In her mid-30s, Ruth discovered the wild and wonderful work of Disability Arts. She was appointed Director of Disability Arts Cymru (DAC) in August 2019. DAC is one of the longest serving disability arts organisations in the UK, and works throughout Wales to promote equal opportunities in the arts for the disabled.

Caroline Bowditch

CEO, Arts Access Victoria (Australia)

After 16 years living and working in the UK, Caroline Bowditch returned to Australia to take up the role as Chief Executive Officer at Arts Access Victoria, the leading arts and disability organisation in Victoria dedicated to the social and artistic transformation for people with disability. She is also best known as a performer, maker, teacher, speaker and mosquito buzzing in the ears of the arts industry in the UK and further afield.

Panel Speakers

Stevens Chan

Founder, SOS Missions Berhad (Malaysia)

Stevens Chan, an entrepreneur, lost his eyesight to glaucoma at the age of 45 in 2007. He found a new calling in life and founded SOS Missions Berhad (a non-profit organization) in 2011 with his wife, to stop unnecessary blindness and encourage others, like him, who have lost their eyesight. Stevens is also a social activist advocating for inclusive and equality rights for the disabled, and a social entrepreneur with the internationally renowned Dialogue in the Dark, a franchise with presence in more than 50 countries championing access for the blind or visually impaired persons.

Jean Loo

Co-Founder & Lead Producer, Superhero Me (Singapore)

Jean practises social advocacy, creative arts and community mobilisation to assemble projects that push for progress on inclusive education and equality in childhood. She co-founded SUPERHERO ME, an inclusive arts movement that focuses on fostering social interaction between children of different needs and mentors a network of creatives and facilitators. Jean is interested in growing inclusive practices in schools and the community. For her commitment to inclusion through the arts, Jean was conferred the Singapore Youth Award 2018.

Sofia Begum

Programmer, Children & Youth, The Esplanade Co Ltd (Singapore)

As an Esplanade Programmer for Children and Youth, Sofia has produced, presented and developed theatre work for children. Sofia produces PLAYtime!, an immersive theatre experience for 2 - 6 year olds which also includes sensory-friendly performances. Aside from her theatre work, she also works on illustrations for children, and designs activities for them in the Esplanade PIP's PLAYbox. In 2020, she worked on PLAYlab – a new development initiative that aims to provide a platform for artists to process and create work for children of diverse needs and abilities.

Tan Beng Tian

Independent Theatre Practitioner (Singapore)

Beng Tian is a disciple of the late renowned traditional hand puppet master Li Bofen and is a recipient of the JCCI Singapore Foundation Culture Award in 2005. In her twenty-four years career, she has worked with major companies such as Drama Box, The Finger Players, The Necessary Stage, The Theatre Practice, Toy Factory Productions, Wild Rice and also collaborated with Esplanade Theatres on the Bay, and international artist Zuni Icosahedron (Hong Kong). She is a proud member of SDEA (Singapore Drama Educators Association) and Access Arts Hub, which aims to make arts more accessible for persons with disabilities in Singapore. In 2019, she

collaborated with a diverse team of creatives to stage *Not in My Lifetime*, a production that caters equally to both non-disabled and disabled audiences.

Breakout Session Speakers

Alicia Teng

Assistant Director, Community & Access, National Gallery Singapore (Singapore)

Alicia Teng currently heads the Community and Access team, which oversees access initiatives, volunteer management and community engagement at National Gallery Singapore. Over the last year, she led the development of access programmes such as “Silent Tour”, “Gallery Signs Tour and Storytelling”, “Chinese Dialect Tours and Sister Guides” in partnership with community stakeholders to better engage with diverse communities at the Gallery. Her 11 years of art administration experience include marketing, sales and development for the Singapore Arts Festival and partnership development at the Gallery, prior to her transfer to Community and Access.

Kavitha Krishnan

Artistic Director, Resident Choreographer, Maya Dance Theatre Ltd (Singapore)

Kavitha Krishnan is the co-founder and artistic director of Maya Dance Theatre (MDT). She is trained in Bharatha Natyam and creates inter-disciplinary dance-theatre works to bring insight to social issues. In 2018, Kavitha founded Diverse Abilities Dance Collective (DADC) as part of MDT and enables co-existence of both abled and differently abled performers. Kavitha is also a qualified Occupational Therapist with a Masters in Community Services Management from University of Swansea, Wales, and a recipient of Artistic Excellence Award from the late S R Nathan, Singapore’s sixth and longest serving President.

Paul Adams

Learning & Engagement Manager, Singapore Repertory Theatre (Singapore)

Paul Adams is the Learning & Engagement Manager at Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT). His focus is facilitating and managing arts education programmes and participation opportunities across formal education, community outreach and venue-based programmes. Paul has been involved in many Access and Inclusion programmes, including working with Shattering Images, a theatre company for adults with learning difficulties and Alternative Outcomes, a company of adults experiencing homelessness. He is a keen champion of the Access Arts Hub established in Singapore.

Peter Sau

Artist-Educator, Theatre Director and Producer (Singapore)

Peter is an artist-educator, theatre director and producer who facilitates the professional development of artists with disabilities. He holds a Professional Diploma in Intercultural Theatre (Acting) from Intercultural Theatre Institute, Singapore, and a M.A in Advanced Theatre Practice from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (UK). As a recipient of the Young Artist Award (2011) and 2015 Life! Theatre Awards ‘Best Actor’, he teaches in mainstream contexts and

expands his practice through creating original and authentic performances with D/deaf and disabled artists.

Dawn joy-Leong

Researcher and Multi-Artist (Singapore)

Dr. Dawn-joy Leong is a researcher and artist with an MPhil in music composition and PhD in Autism, Neurodiversity and Multi-Art Praxis. Dr. Leong is Autistic, and passionately advocates for disabled leadership, equity and representation in all areas of life involving the disabled.

Claire Teo

Theatre Actor and Singer (Singapore)

Claire graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts with a Diploma in Performance and has a Distinction in the Trinity Guild Hall: Initial Text Examinations as well as a Grade 3 in Classical Ballet. Her performances included Cake Theatrical Productions' *Rubber Girl on the Loose* and Pink Gajah Theatre's *Alter Egos*. Closely mentored by Peter Sau, she performed in *Making A Stand* (2018) and *Something About Home* (commissioned by National Gallery Singapore for the Light to Night Festival 2020) which creatively combines Spoken English, Singapore Sign Language, Creative Captioning and Audio Description.

Partho Bhowmick

Founder, Blind with Camera & Beyond Sight Foundation (India)

Partho is a Mumbai-based photographer, researcher, curator, writer and the founder of the Beyond Sight Foundation. In 2006, he started Blind With Camera to teach photography to visually impaired persons. In 2010, he launched the world's first virtual e-School for photography for the blind. He has trained over two thousand visually impaired persons in photography in India, UK, Greece, Singapore and Malaysia. He has designed and curated several inclusive photography exhibitions in India and abroad. He also conducts sensory photography workshops for the sighted (blindfolded), with visually impaired photographers as trainers. He is a resource person for several Art Access projects in India. Partho has written three books and he is a TEDx speaker as well as a recipient of several national and international awards.

Moderators

Justin Lee

Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies (Singapore)

Justin Lee is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies. He is interested in issues related to disability, community development and social services. He has created a wikipedia platform that flows mass participation in the mapping of social needs (socialcollab.sg) and co-founded a skilled volunteer matching platform (serve.sg). He is also Chairperson of ArtsWok Collaborative, a non-profit organisation engaged in arts-based community development.

Aruna Johnson

Deputy Director, Education & Development, National Arts Council (Singapore)

Aruna Johnson is an educator and administrator with 20 years of experience in a diverse range of roles. She was formerly a Head of Department, Curriculum Specialist, and Vice-Principal at the MOE. She has a MA in English Studies with a specialisation in Literature and Film History from NUS, and an Ed.M in Curriculum & Policy from Teachers College, Columbia University. She has been involved in various arts projects over the years with groups such as the Little Bird Theatre, the Asian Film Archives and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 2016, she joined the NAC as Deputy Director for Education & Development, and now works with schools, artists, government and corporate partners to shape arts education policies and programmes for children and youth across the pre-tertiary education sector.

Alecia Neo

Artist and Co-founder of Brack (Singapore)

Alecia Neo's socially engaged practice unfolds primarily through photography, video, and participatory workshops that address modes of mobility, reciprocity, caregiving, and wellbeing to explore issues of identity and the search for self. She is the co-founder of Brack, a platform for socially engaged art, and the founder of Unseen Art Initiatives, an inclusive platform promoting access and innovations for persons with visual-impairment by building capacity through the arts. Neo was the recipient of the Young Artist Award in 2016 and the Singapore Youth Award in 2019 and an Artist-in-Residence in the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore Residencies Programme.